

# NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARS

## Alumni Promotion and Gifts Make Program Here Largest in the Big Eight

Six years ago, only 19 National Merit Scholars attended Mizzou. Now, there are 132, the most of any school in the Big Eight—a tribute to an Alumni Association recruiting program and Development Fund drives to raise scholarship money.

There will be more National Merit Scholars next year. One, high school senior Jeff Anglen, attended a special recruiting weekend for merit scholars this fall.

He writes: "I feel that it was an enriching experience and felt somewhat flattered at the treatment I received from everyone with whom I came in contact.

"You will no doubt be glad to hear the experience dispelled my fears as to the 'impersonal' attitude that one so often hears about in connection with large universities. I have definitely decided to attend M.U. next year."

Chancellor Herbert Schooling says National Merit scholars are "pacesetters" for other students. And, they provide "an intellectual challenge to the faculty who work with them," he says.

Prior to 1969, Missouri was losing virtually all its National Merit Scholars to out-of-state schools. "This meant that the state was being denied the productive potential of these students," Chancellor Schooling says. "If they go out of state, it's likely they won't come back."

Every year, 300 to 350 Missouri high school seniors are named National Merit finalists through competitive examinations. These students are in some measure the cream of the crop—the top one percent of the year's high school graduates.

Some universities, notably Michigan State and Macalester College (St. Paul, Minn.), actively recruit merit scholars like others recruit athletes.

"It takes so little to get them to come to Missouri," says Dr. Paul Nelson, Honors College director and chairman of the Development Fund's National Merit Scholar Committee.

High school seniors are invited to Campus each fall for a two-day Merit Scholars' Weekend. Last year, 47 scholars attended and 42 enrolled as freshmen. Most of these students received only a token \$100 from the scholarship fund for merit scholars. A very few scholars get privately financed "corporate scholarships"—grants from major corporations.

Since money is not the calling card, the special recruiting weekend plays a big role in some students' decisions. Pre-journalism freshman Greg Salerno attended the weekend last year. At the time, he also was considering Kansas, Michigan State and Northwestern—all schools with good journalism programs. For him, the weekend "probably turned the tide.

"I was impressed by stories of J-school grads, what kind of jobs they had and the amount of money they made. The weekend gave me a chance to talk to administrators and faculty the average student never gets to see." Greg decided that Missouri would be "the best J-school I could get for the money."

Like any other student, a National Merit Scholar who qualifies on the basis of low parental income can get financial aid in the form of grants, loans, and a work-study job in addition to his basic \$100.

This year, the Financial Aids office awarded about \$36,000 to National Merit scholars. About \$12,000, or one-third of the amount needed, was raised last summer by volunteers conducting telethons in St. Louis and Kansas City. They specifically asked for donations to the National Merit Scholarship Fund. The other two-thirds came from unrestricted Development Fund monies.

More than 300 alumni and friends of the University have contributed to the fund this year. "People are very willing to give," says Gary Freeman, annual giving manager.

This year for the first time, fund-raising is being approached from the aspect of raising a permanent endowment for the scholarship

fund, Freeman says. "Ultimately, we hope to build a \$1 million endowment."

"Many alumni are as rah-rah about this program as others are about football," Paul Nelson says. "Not only do we need their financial support, but they are helpful in recruiting too."

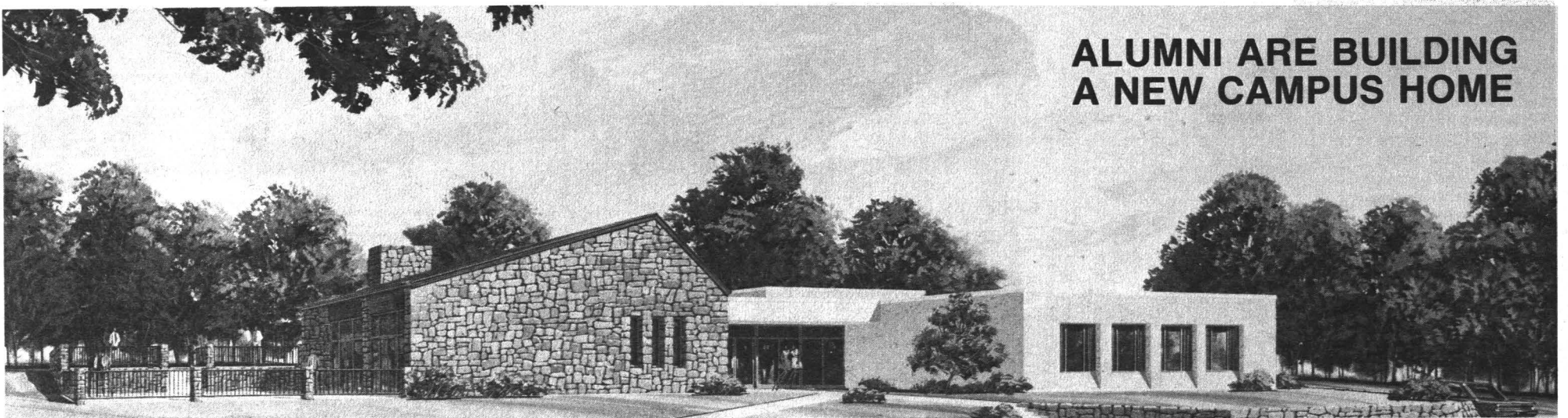
Alumni play an important part in the Merit Scholars Weekend, described by one student as "not hard-sell at all." The Alumni Association provides buses to bring students to Campus from Kansas City and St. Louis. This fall, about 80 students came. "If not for the bus transportation, I would not have been able to attend," one said.

Buses arrived on a Sunday afternoon. The scholars toured Campus, chauffeured by student volunteers. They heard talks by four directors of honors programs, and they met deans, administrators and faculty. Sunday night, they stayed with upperclass National Merit Scholars or with faculty families.

After breakfast on Monday, the prospective students visited departments that interested them. Nelson says the departments "always do a good job" in showing scholars what Mizzou can offer. "It's a great compliment to a department to have bright students," he says. And finally, the scholars attended a banquet given by the Chancellor.

One senior said, "I was glad to have the opportunity to visit. My main purpose was to get a more objective view of the private universities I have visited. I'm glad Missouri stresses . . . excellence through (academic) recruiting as well as football player recruiting." This student listed Missouri as one of his top choices.

Several changes will be made in next year's weekend, Nelson says. There will be more food, for one thing. And, the National Merit Scholar Committee wants Columbia alumni to house the students overnight. "Alumni often are even more enthusiastic about recruiting than are faculty members or other National Merit Scholars," he says. □



Plans for an alumni center on the Columbia Campus were approved by the University's Board of Curators at its December meeting. The 15,500-square-foot structure, being financed entirely with gift money from alumni and friends of Ol' Mizzou, will be located adjacent to the University's golf course on Stadium Road (Route 740). The Center is scheduled for completion in summer 1976.

Some \$600,000 in contributions already is in hand, and an additional \$200,000 has been pledged. Cost of construction and furnishings is expected to exceed this amount, however, as inflation remains an adverse factor.

Numerous large contributions have been

made as memorial gifts. These gifts are earmarked to finance various areas in the building that will be named after contributors or in honor or memory of other persons.

The major-gift (\$1,000 to \$100,000 and up) portion of the campaign is continuing. George H. Clay II, AB, LLB '34, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City and chairman of the budget committee of the Development Fund Board, says that in April all alumni will be asked to support the Alumni Center. "I'm sure we can get everyone's help to raise the necessary funds for this beautiful 'home on Campus' for all of us," Clay said.

The Center will serve as a home for more

than 108,000 alumni and will be the headquarters for more than 100 different boards and committees within the Alumni Association, the Development Fund, and other volunteer groups. Open houses for alumni are planned in conjunction with all major Campus affairs, such as commencement and athletic events. The Center also will be the site for a new program of alumni seminars now being planned by the Alumni Association.

As alumni headquarters, the Center also will house the personnel making up the University's Alumni Relations and Development Division, the group serving Mizzou's alumni and other volunteer organizations. □